

[T. E. Hines]

1

Folk Stuff - Early Settler

Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 [83?]

Page #1

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T. E. Mines, 68, was born on his father's farm in Wayne Co., N.C. He was taught to ride horses before he was eight, and worked them to plow with before he was 10. He decided to seek his fortune in Texas when he reached 21, and immediately left home. He was employed as a cowboy on the NUT Ranch in Erath Co. for three Yrs., then one Yr. on the JR connected, also in Erath, for one Yr. He was then employed on the LXL in Hardeman Co. for three Yrs. Leaving the LXL, he went to Demming N.M., where he was employed for one Yr. by the Floreda Land & Cattle Co. of Sedalia Mo., who owned and operated the KILL Ranch near Demming. The foreman of the ranch sent him to Ft. Worth Texas with a train load of beef. After handling the KILL beef, he decided to remain there and enter the cattle Comm. business. After five Yrs in the Comm. business, he was injured by a steer and retired, from all activity. His residence is now at 925 E. Hattie St. Ft. Worth, Tex. His story:

“Well, I was born in a log cabin miles and miles away from anything like a town, but I wasn't born right on the range, as you might say. I was born Sept. 13, 1869, in Wayne Co., N.C. My dad ran a pretty good sized farm with a few head of milk cows, which I hazed

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around considerable after I was taught to ride hosses. Now, just when I learnt to ride, I can't say but I know I was riding before I was eight because I was plowing in the field before I was 10. That I know and am sure of.

"And, I really thought I knowed enough about cow critters to make a good cow punch by the time I was 21, but right there was where I got my hair in the butter, as the feller said. On my 21st birthday, I told my parents I was coming to Texas and be a cow puncher on some big ranch because that was what I was born for, had it in my blood and couldn't get it out. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Well sir, my dad just grinned and told me I might's well learn right now as later on down the road that punching cows wasn't the bed of roses it looked like. Ma bawled and cut up a lot about it, but after dad took her off and talked to her, she dried up and seemed to be resigned. I always figured he'd told her I'd get off a few miles, then come back home like a whupped pup. If he did, I told myself that here's where he's going to be fooled a - plenty because I was a man and could act like a man.

"Along sometime the next day, dad gave me a skinny old work nag and told me that I'd better take that one because the cow outfits furnished horses and he couldn't afford to be the loser of a hoss. Needed them for to work he said. For a hull, I had to take and old tree that all the leather'd been wore off, tie it on with a rope and make my stirrups with short pieces of rope. I finally got fixed and left the morning of the second day after our talk about me going away.

"I just had about five [dollars?] in money, and by the time I got along in deep Georgia, I was dead broke but I wouldn't go back. Not a couple of months there before I got to Wrath Co. in Texas, I lived on mighty little else but wild game. Plenty of that, alright, but I'd been used to a change now and then and I was beginning to get plenty lean.

"In those days, any traveler that came into a ranch yard was asked to 'Light, neighbor, and feed your nag, then come and get your own nose into the feed bag.' Or, if it was near meal time for every body, they invited you to: rest yourself and come in at meal time.' That was

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the way it was everywhere, but I was leary of what they'd say about my trampy outfit. Why, I looked a lot worse'n them old saddle bums that used to make the country, and'd never work for anybody at any price. Well, you see. I'd never been from behind my ma's apron strings and really didn't know how to make it around. All I had was the will not to go back, and you can't eat that.

"One day while riding throug Erath Co., I came to a ranch and was so hungry that I didn't care what was said or done. I wanted to eat if they'd let me. Instead of making fun of me, they fed me and offered me a job if I'd take it. Take it!? I told the ram rod to put me at anything he had for me to do, regardless of what it was, because a job was the one thing I wanted and nothing else but. I was so anxious that the whole crew of cow punchers busted out laughing.

"The ram rod, Jake Nut, told me that I could have a job punching cattle providing I could ride hosses. Then he turned around and said: That thing you've got there's not a hoss. Its a bone bag.'

"I thought he just meant riding hosses like we worked back on the farm. Sleek, fat, pretty farm hosses. Not anything like the stock you have on the farm today. Not a-tall, but they beat the nag I rode into the NUT Spread, so I told him I'd ride most anything he had to get the job.'

"That statement cost me a few bruises because I didn't know they had concentrated dynamite in leather cases they called hosses, down here. Now I'll give you a sort of a picture of what happened that first morning. One of the boys stalled me in the bunkhouse for about 30 minutes after the rest had gone to the Hoss corral, telling and showing me how the boys lived, showing me 4 a fiddle they used for music when they felt romantic, and having me read my bunk. That's what they called it when you looked into your covers for varmints. I just thought he was being nice to me because I was a new hand and he wanted me to get into the routine around there.

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"Well, sir. One of the boys came to the bunkhouse and told us that all the hosses were saddled and we might's well come on and get started out to work. We went down, and some of the boys were already in their saddles. One of them showed me the nag I was to ride, and it looked like it was a gentle. In fact, it was the worst looking one of the whole outfit. Shaggy, nothing like the rest of them rode. I didn't say anything but climbed into the saddle right quick, then one of the boys closed the gate. You see, my hoss was still inside, but the rest of them had their's outside. Well sir, I no sooner hit that hull 'til hell busted loose. I wasn't on that hoss as long's it takes to tell it 'til I hit old mother earth on all fours.

"I'd never seen a buckner working out, so I thought I'd done something or other to scare the nag. All the fellers were busting their innards laughing at me, but I thought, 'I'll show them.' I started towards the hoss, and a couple jumped down off the fence to help me. They helped me get into the saddle, and then we were off to the races. I stayed for about a minute this time, then got throwed off. I thought them fellers'd die a-laughing at me.

They went on to work, then, and Jake hisself came and helped me get my hull on another broom tail. This one wasn't so bad, but I never rode him either. The truth of the matter is, I didn't ride a hoss that week. Them dad blamed old Mustangs throwed 5 me more than 50 times before I finally stuck and stayed on one. I was so sore I walked like I had a hump in my back big's a camel's. Now you can laugh all you want to, but I was a wreck. Them rascals like to have got me before I got one of them.

"That was good training for me though, because I busted in a wild one before the next fall roundup. Flat busted him in and I was the only one to ever ride him 'til he was a cutter.

I lit on the NUT right at the start of roundup, and they kept me busy at the branding fire. I don't know just how many dogies I did slap the NUT iron on, but there was a many a one, [?] tell you for sure. I expect there was right close to a 1,000 dogies I put the iron on.

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"The way you get the dogies into the branding place is to roundup all the cattle on the range. The way that's done is for all the ranchers from roundabout that particular range to have men represent them in the roundup, and go to all the places cattle could've drifted to in about five months's time. That was in the day of the open range, although I was still on the NUT when the range began to be fenced in Erath.

"I was on the NUT three years before I left. During that three years, I saw at least two pretty good sized stampedes a year. Now, there's a sight you ought to see. A herd on the stampede. They don't have a lick of sense at that time, and will run over anything not too big. If its too big, the herd will go around, but will follow the leader. They all have leaders. From one to seven or eight at a time during a stampede, an all the leaders head the same way, working together. But even they don't know where they're going, an likely as not, they'll lead a herd over 6 a precipice, a canyon wall, the banks of a deep arroyo, draw, or anything. They'll lead them right into water where a number of them are bound to drown. And, if a man happens to be in front of the herd and falls. Well, its just too bad for him for he had a bad day.

"One of the most wonderful sights there are to see anywhere is when the lightning plays over a herd during an electric storm. I've actually seen a big bolt of lightning bounce over and around a herd just as if it was a big ball being shoved around by a kid. That's one of the many things about cowboys life the picture shows have missed making a picture of. [And?], you know why? I'll tell you its because there's so much danger right then. And good reason too. I'd be scared if a ball of lightning bounced around over my head, so a herd's bound to get scared. By the time lightning gets to going good, the herd's already standing and ready to run. Its what they call instinct. Then, when a ball bounces around, you're mighty lucky if you can keep them quiet 'til the ball jumps off. Then, on the other hand, you never can tell which way a herd will stampede, and if you had a bunch of people around a herd, some of them wouldn't be fit to make mud pies out/ of after about 1,000 head of beef stamped them down.

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"Lightning's just one of the many things'll stampede a herd of cattle. Wild animals, sudden rackets, anything'll do it. Why, one of the stampedes on the NUT was caused by a stranger riding up to the herd and getting down off his hoss. It'd already been raining, and when its raining, a herd'll get up and put its tails to the direction the rain's coming from. They're mighty skittish right then, too, and are already on their feet. Well, this feller's 7 sporting some dudish trimmings on his hoss's reigns, and they tinkle as he gets off. You might's well fired a cannon because after one of them snorted, another snorted, and the race was on.

"Of course, I was right at him when he got off his hoss, but I never did see who bowled him over with a real swift kick after the herd got a-going. He cussed a-plenty about that, then his hoss joined the chase too. He was to days getting his hoss back, then Jake Nut introduced him as a prospective buyer. He didn't buy any NUT stock, but nobody cared. He caused the boys an extra week's work rounding that herd up again for they never did get it to mill, even though they made tries time and again.

"One of the best cutting hosses the NUT sported even got killed by stumbling. The only reason his ride wasn't killed was because he was throwed into a small cut the critters jumped.

"Speaking of hosses, the NUT kept a regular hoss buster on the spread, but most of the boys liked to bust in their own broom tails. The one I busted in, I watched the others do it before I tackled it. When I got the hackamore, they only had one for some reason or other. And, they only wanted one being busted at a time. That way, there was one in the corral all the time.

"While I was longer busting mine than the others were their's my hoss turned out right well and was a top cutter for any spread. Jake gave him to me because I busted him myself, and had had to much trouble learning to ride to start with. After he was mine, I named him

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'Star,' because of a white spot on his forehead that looked something like a star. I really think there was four points, I'm not sure, but I know there was three or more.

"Star was the only real hoss I ever owned. When I left 8 the NUT after three years on it, I went over to J.R. Longacre's ranch. It was also in Erath Co., and was every bit as big a spread, if not maybe a little bigger. Longacre hired me hisself, after looking Star over and making me an offer for him. I wouldn't sell, so he gave me a job on the spread. Possibly thinking I'd maybe change my mind later on. He didn't know how much I loved old Star, and wouldn't have traded him for the moon.

"I worked two roundups, the Spring and Fall, then left his spread too. I don't recall just how many head he run, but his iron was the 'JR Connected,' made like this:

"I headed for the Panhandle when I left the JR, but went to work for the LXL in Hardeman Co., owned by the Smith brothers. They worked a lot of Mexicans on the LXL, and run around 15,000 head in their iron. Why, I reckon they branded 7,000 dogies every year, with what they bought and raised too. They bought from every body that had something to sell for not much. That was their policy.

"Another policy of their's, and the one that didn't make such a hit with me, was their wanting to hire as cheap as they could. They never run it under me, though. I told them I wouldn't chaperon cows around for less then 30 and', so they gave it to me because they needed to hire a few whites to run their Spiks. (Mex)

"One of the outstanding things about the LXL, in my mind, was how the Spiks were forever fighting. Just any little old thing, and they'd go at it. The way they fought, was to wrap a blanket around one arm, then hold a knife in the other hand. The blanket was used as sort of a shield to defend themselves from each other. They fought to kill, but when one of them was hurt pretty 9 bad, the others'd horn in and stop the fray. The whites on the spread didn't care how much they cut and gouged. In fact, a few of them encouraged

Library of Congress

more fights, thinking maybe they'd all kill each other and then we might have white cow punchers on the spread. No luck as far's that was concerned, though.

"Now ranch work in Texas was pretty much the same all over. Stampedes when you had herds rounded up, branding in the Spring and Fall sale cattle shipped after the Fall roundup, and so on. I don't recollect the road but our beef was shipped by railroad from the LXL.

"There was just one thing besides Spik help that was different on the LXL, and that was the Spik's way of mounting a hoss and roping. I don't know if I can make it plain to you, but the Spike whirls his cast to the left while the white's cast was made to the right. That is, he whirled his rope on his right before casting, an the Spik's on the opposite. Then, in mounting a hoss, anwhite would catch a-holt of his saddle horn, jump up and pull at the same time, litterally what they call, vaulting into the saddle. The Spik, though, he'd just climb into his hull. As far's being the best, there wasn't much difference there because the greasers could really rope and ride. They could hold their own, but didn't have the guts the whites had, and that made the whites the better cow puncher where an any difference was made a-tail.

"After three years on the LXL, I left and went West. I was on my way own for over two months, I reckon, before I lit in Demming, N.M., and was hired by Shy, the ram rod for the KILL Ranch, a few miles out of Demming. KILL was the iron, but the name of the spread was the Floreda Land And Cattle Co., and owned by a bunch of Sedalis, 10 Mo. bankers.

"There wasn't so many head on the spread, around 1,500. We had a lot of trouble with the Bandidoes from across the Mexican border. The spread wasn't but about 25 miles N. of the line to start with, and the country was plenty mountainous. That gives the bandidoes, Mexican bandits, rustlers, and so on, a better shot at the beef as close to the border as we were.

Library of Congress

"That was one of the reasons the KILL spread hired nothing but top hands that were fast and straight with their lead. There was one buckaroo with the KILL that could certainly spread his lead around fast and fancy free. His name was Bob McFarley, and the rifle he carried was about the best and truest in that part of the country.

"The rifle was presented to him by the citizens of a little old mining town in Arizona. [Charelstown?]. It was on account of a fight with some Indians. McFarley had been used to roaming around over the country, working when he wanted to, and not working when he didn't feel like it.

"One day he topped a pretty high hill, and heard some shots down the side, pretty close to where he was, so he rode to see what was coming off. When he got to where he could see, he saw about 30 Indians shooting at a party of charcoal burners. Now, that's all I know about what they done in the line of work, but I've heard the story about the fight from four or five different sources. Bob says he left his hoss hobbled, climbed down the hill to a spot of good advantage, then went to picking off Indians.

"Now, you know when an Indian gets killed, the rest are more daring in getting his body when they are in fighting, for some 11 reason or other, and that way, nobody hardly ever knows just how any Indians get killed. Anyway, when the fight was over and the red skins kept trying to get one of them that had sneak his way up to where he had an awful advantage over the miners, or, burners, and Bob had opened up on him the first thing and killed him, Bob would pick them off as they sneaked or ran into get this red skin. Bob says he knows he killed not less than 15 of them devils in all, and 10 of them while they tried to get that one body. They finally left the Indian there.

"Bob says the burners heard him grunting that Indian parley voo all during the fight. He kept trying to tell them to beat it and leave him, but he must have been an important brave or something because they kept trying to get him anyway. They felt that as long's he was alive, that they might get him and he'd be able to live and fight again.

Library of Congress

"Along about dark, the red skins gave up and left, and the Indian was dead when the burners come out to see what had been left. I think Bob said the burners told him there'd been 14 of them when the fight started, and the soldiers had found where they Indians had [waited?] for four days for the burners to get away from their rifles. That was one reason the burners made such a bad showing was because only three or four of them got to rifles.

"There were only five of them left, and Bob stayed right with them 'til they got help from Charleston and the wounded ones had sort of got healed over.

"Four or five days after the fight, a company of soldiers showed up. They'd found where the Indians'd camped, and had trailed them to where the fight took place. When the captain walked up to 12 the tent where Bob was flopping, he stopped to look at the dead Indian that Bob had hung up on a tree about 20 foot from his tent. The captain told Bob not to harm the body because he intended to send a wagon out from the post to get it and give it a burial.

"Bob said, 'burial, hell! That's my Indian and if you bother him, I'll put you up on that limb alongside him.' The cap' didn't bother to argue about it but went to his men and left.

I've heard Bob tell how he tried to make the burners that had been left feel better by hanging the red skin up and using him for a dinner bell. When one of them got the meal ready, he'd go to the body and beat on it, and it'd make a little noise. If left very long, it'd parched over like a drum because that's an awful dry country out there. I don't know how much noise the thing'd made nor how far you could hear it, but it was a good idea.

"Man'ys the time I've read the silver badge on the stock of the rifle. It said, 'PRESENTED TO BOB MCFARLEY FOR BRAVERY AMONG THE INDIANS.' 'BY THE CITIZENS OF CHARLESTON ARIZONA.'

"I liked the Floreda spread, but someway or other, I still wasn't satisfied. I wanted to travel or something, and when the chance came to go to Fort Worth with a train load of beef,

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I asked for the job of caring for the beef en route. Shy gave me the job, and after the commission co handled it here in Fort Worth, I wired Shy I wouldn't be back because I was going into the commission business here.

"That I done, for five years. Might still be at it but one of the ornery critters we had to handle in them days gored me up pretty bad and laid me up. The only saving thing about it all, was that I'd saved all the time I worked and had a nice BR laid away I'm getting the old age [pension?] now, and everything's alright.